

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 6635, AN ACT CONCERNING SOLAR POWER,  
BEFORE THE CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND THE ENERGY AND  
TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE ON MARCH 10, 2009**

My name is Ann Berman, as private citizen and as Chair of the Milford Environmental Concerns Coalition, ECC, of which we represent approximately 440 members, do support HB 6635.

As a private citizen, I was one of the first if not the first to take advantage of receiving, from the Clean Energy Fund, a rebate to install solar voltaic panels on my roof in June of 2005. I have on average, produced more than their estimated 3,000 kWh per year. As of this day the total is 12,616 kWh and have saved for my carbon foot print 25,232 lbs of carbon.

It is the goal and purpose of the ECC to promote clean energy. The ECC promoted and helped the City to become the third City in Connecticut to be a Clean Energy Community. We have to date accumulated 516 points and 486 customers. We have a solar instillation on the City's Harbor building and in progress, a proposal for the installation of solar panels for our Foran High School. Last year we, in partnership with the City's Energy Task Force sponsored two Energy and Conservation fairs at our Library with emphasis on the promotion of Solar Power and sign ups for Clean Energy.

Solar energy installations have escalated beyond all expectations in the United States. It is finally getting to be recognized that investing in Solar is a very viable investment and of course, why not, the SUN and WIND are our only renewable energies. It is difficult to understand why this concept is so difficult to grasp, especially when compared to oil, natural gas, coal and nuclear, whose production is so expensive, detrimental to the environment and their supplies so finite.

"The National Renewable Energy Laboratory published a report that examined the history of investment in the solar industry and its pages are chock-full of encouraging data." "One tidbit in particular is a jaw-dropper: from 2000 to 2007, worldwide investment in solar rose from \$66 million to \$12.4 billion. During the last three years of that time period investment in the United States alone jumped from \$215 million to \$3.2 billion—a whopping compounded annual growth rate of 145 percent. And in just one year, 2006, global private equity investments shot up 476 percent." Though they say there isn't historical data to allay anxieties about solar weathering this economic crisis, however, "another report released that same month ought to: the market research firm Alta Terra found that 72 percent of commercial solar installations are now financed with PPA's (power-purchasing agreement)." The PPA's are credited for this hyper growth in commercial Solar Power. With the crunch for polysilicon having been alleviated, because of the industry's quick response for increasing production, which lowers the cost, advances in panel efficiency, the escalating price of grid power, improved manufacturing techniques and carbon-cap legislation will probably make subsidies unnecessary. They say, "every time installed solar capacity doubles, costs fall by 18% to 23 percent. However, in the meantime we cannot drop the ball on this issue. Just look at the subsidies that have been given to oil, gas and coal. "According to the International Energy Agency, solar received \$198 million in subsidies in 2007. In the same year oil and natural gas collected \$ 2.1 billion; coal got 3.2 billion. Taxpayers have bankrolled fossil fuels for a century, funding research and development and helping dirty energy stay cheap." (See NRDC's Publication **ONEARTH**, Spring 2009 issue, page 26-33)

We as a State cannot let ourselves go backwards on this so important issue. We need to go forward, placing Solar as our renewable energy, on the top of our priority list. Today solar generates 4-tenths of a percent of electricity in the U.S., but if its growth continues as such, its generation could hit 10% by 2025, with the hope of eventually 20%.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Submitted by,

Ann Berman, Chair of ECC

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